Notable Source Book Lokopakara of Chavundaraya

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Places Mentioned:

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Summary:

Kannada poets during the 11th century composed new types of works, most of them scientific works which include Chavundaraya's 'Lokopakara', Chandraraja's 'Madana Tilaka' and Durgasimha's 'Panchathatra' (1031). Sridharacharya wrote a work on astrology.

The Author of 'Lokopakara', Chavundaraya lived during the days of Chalukya Emperor Jayasimha II (1020-45), and his work is of around 1025. He was an Advaita Brahmin of the Kashyapa gotra, hailing from Mudgale. Jayasimha Il appointed him as Sarvadhikari and granted him the village, Mahabali.

The work has 12 Adhikaras or Chapters.

First two chapters are on astrology, first dealing with 'Panchanga Shuddhi' and the second with Mahurtas for the 14 'Karmas'. Third chapter on architecture includes planning of a house and discussion on the use of the materials. The fourth chapter discusses the natural calamities. The fifth deals with 'water divining' in the sense what f lora or natural phenomena help one- locate or strike water ina well is to be sunk. Sixth chapter is on 'Vrikshayurveda', discussing the ways of planting, diseases of plants and their treatment, grafting and some peculiar processes of making one tree yield two types of fruits, or of raising fruits without seeds, etc.

If the seventh chapter deals with perfumes and the methods of their production and sources, eighth is on cookery. It also discusses methods of preserving food items, extracting fruit juice, preparing artificial milk or curds, etc. Ninth is on medicine, not only for men and children but even for animals like cows, horses and elephants. Urine therapy and treatment of consumption, typhoid, leprosy, impotency, etc. are discussed. The tenth chapter discusses poisons and the treatment including snake bite and dog bite. The eleventh chapter deals with interpretation of physical features of men, women and animals like cow, elephant, dog, fowls, etc. and palmistry. The twelfth is on omens.

The work must be appreciated for its critical attitude and experimental approach. It does not rely much on superstitions. Many of its statement are worth testing by experiments. It is a source book for contemporary social history also.